of lines in Tamil Nadu which the hon. Minister is proposing to close and, if possible, their names?

SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: There are two lines. One is from Peralam to Karaikal. It is metre gauge and 24 kilometres long. It is in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry. The loss is 9.08 lakhs. The other one is Mayuram-Tarangambadis. It is 30 kilometres long in Tamil Nadu. It is giving us a loss of 10.34 lakhs.

श्री चतुरानन मिश्र : श्रीमन्, मैं यह जानना चाहता हू कि बिहार में कौन-सी अनइकानामिक लाइन्स हैं। अभी तक मंत्री महोदय ने कहा है कि एकमात्र कारण है अनइकानामिक होना, लेकिन कुछ ऐसे स्ट्रेटेजिक क्षेत्र होंगे जहां अनइकानामिक होने पर भी रेलवे लाइन को चालू रखना होगा क्योंकि उसका सम्बन्ध देश की सुरक्षा से होगा। दूसरी बात यह है कि क्या सरकार ने इस पहलू पर विचार किया है कि रेलवे की अपनी इनएफीशिएन्सी के चलते वह लाइन अनइकानामिक हो रही है क्योंकि हमारे राज्य में राजधानी पटना को उत्तर बिहार से किसी भी ट्रेन से 2.4 घंटे से कम मे नहीं पहुंच सकते। अगर इस से चलें तो 6 घंटे मे आ सकते हैं। वहां आपकी लाइन अनइकानामिक हो ही जायगी।

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is about uneconomic lines and not about North-Bihar railways.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: That is why I said that the only consideration should not be 'uneconomical'. The strategic areas should be taken separately and the inefficiency of the railways must be considered. If the inefficiency of the Railways is proved, then you should reconsider that area. I have already asked about Bihar.

श्रीमती मोहसिना किदवई : अध्यक्ष जी, बिहार की भी दो-तीन लाइन हैं जो अनइकानामिक है। बख्तियारपुर-राजगीर तो हट गई है। पूरी लिस्ट मेरे पास है। कटिहार मनियार घाट है, और भी एक-आध है। माननीय सदस्य कह रहे हैं वही बात मैंने कही। 74 लाइन रोकी हैं, 200 थीं, सबको नहीं रोक सकते। आप लोगों की मदद हो .....

श्री चतुरानन मिश्र : पहले मदद ले लीजिए बात में राकिए।

श्रीमती मोहसिना किदवई : मै यह कह रही थी कि यह समस्या हम लोग समझते हैं। जहां रेलवे की इनएफीशिएन्सी है वह मैं दूर करूंगी। जहां पब्लिक के नुमाइन्दों की मदद की जरूरत है वह वे दें तो मिल कर कुछ सकेंगे तो करेंगे।

Ban on the use of Fluoride in the manufacture of Toothpaste

*285. SHRI J. P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the use of fluoride in the toothpaste causes dental fluorisis-a condition which has neither treatment nor cure; if so, the reaction of Government in regard thereo;

(b) whether Government are aware of the research done in this regard at the Fluoride and Fluorisis Research Laboratories in the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi;

(c) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(d) whether it is proposed to ban the use of fluoride in toothpaste, and if so, what are the details in this regard and if not, the reasons thertfor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH (KUMARI SAROJ KHAPARDE): (a) No, Sir. Application of fluoride toothpaste on teeth surface as such does not cause Dental fluorisis.

(b) and (c) According to surveys and research conducted at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Dental and Skeletal fluorisis is caused by consuming

water, food|agriculture crops and other items which may have more than desired content of fluoride Prevalence of Dental and Skeletal fluorisis, which coexist, is widespread in rural areas of 13 States in the country and in town|cities where people may consume tube well water having excess fluoride.

(d) There is no proposal before the Government to ban the use of fluoride as an ingredient in toothpaste.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Goyal.

SHRI J. P. GOYAL: Sir, I would like to know whether the honourable Minister has come across an article in "The Hindustan Times" of the 20th July 1986 wherein the research which has been mentioned by the Minister herself as having been done in the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences has been mentioned. One Dr. A. K. Sushila has come to this conclusion, after research in that very Institute which the honourable Minister has mentioned, that fluoride causes fluorosis. I mean to say that the toothpaste which contains fluoride causes fluorosis. I would like to know whether the honourable Minister has come across that article and, if not, I would like to request the honourable Minister to read that article and, secondly, to place it before the House and also the research work done regarding fluoride in the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down, Mr. Goyal. After you have put the question, you must sit down.

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO: Sir, the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences has done extensive research on fluorosis and the content of fluoride in water and other substances and what happens as a result of this. The history is a long one, going back to 1937, when fluorosis was found first in some areas of today's Andhra Pradesh which, in those days, formed part of the then Madras Presidency. Now, what the Medical Institute has said that the consumption or ingestion of fluoride over a particular limit will cause fluorosis, namely, if it is water, it should be less than 1 PPM. Now, if it is above that and if over a period such water is drunk or certain foodstuffs are taken, then it will lead to undesirable consequences, *viz.* flurosis whether dental or skeletal. That is the point. Now, this *is something of a general nature*. Now, to say that all this is attributable only to fluoride in the toothpaste would not be correct. We have to go further and see whether the fluoride toothpaste by itself is contributing to it because fluoride toothpaste is needed for something else, that is, to meet the danger of dental caries, what we call cavities. Now it is established all over the world that fluoride is wanted to cure caries, but excess of fluoride can lead to some other undesirable consequences. We have to strike a balance between the two. Sir, that will take some time. Meanwhile, what we have done is--I would like to tell the House--that we have asked the Drug Controller, under whose jurisdiction all these things fall, to find out what would be the appropriate or safe level of fluoride in the toothpaste and make it compulsory on the manufacturers of the toothpaste to keep within those limits. This is what we have taken up with the Drug Controller and I think that is the best solution because if we go in for banning fluoride altogether, that would not be possible since the human body needs some amount of fluoride. We need so many other things also. We need potassium, we need sodium, and, in the same way, fluoride is also needed for the human body. But anything in excess like atisarvatra varjayet if anything is taken in excess then it becomes harmful.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Goyal, please put your second supplementary.

SHRI J. P. GOYAL: Sir, I want to draw the attention of the honourable Minister to the fact that in Kenya and in certain other countries of the world, in view of the enormously high percents-age of dental fluoride, they have banned it and even advertisement of such toothpaste it has been banned. The question now is whether you can contain those persons who are manufacturing such toothpaste. That is my main point. Can you do it

because it has been found that fluoride is in excess percentage?

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO: As I have explained, fluoride is needed for the teeth, in order to check decay of the tooth by cavities or caries. But if fluoride is in excess, then it will lead to fluorisis. So, in between the two we have to strike a balance. That can be done only by continued research just by finding out what is the level of fluoride in the toothpaste. Another complication is that in the first instance, nobody uses toothpaste in our villages or very few people use toothpaste. Still there is fluoride and fluorisis in places like Kanigiri and Nalagonda District headquarters. There is excessive fluorisis. So, we cannot say that all the fluorisis that we find in this country is relatable to a particular toothpaste. This is a very complicated matter. We have to go into it in greater details to the extent we can relate it to fluoride in the toothpaste. We can take remedial measures.

SHRI M. KADHARSHA: Sir, the hon. Minister is always a subject of envy for others because no other Minister in the Cabinet enjoys the assistance of so many charming ladies.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Kadharsha is very jealous.

SHRI M. KADHARSHA: But from the reply given by his deputy, I feel that they are not assisting him properly and lessening his burden. Sir, the hon. Minister says something about fluoride content in the toothpaste. In atropical country like India, the fluoride content should be between 0.5 to 1.5 ppm. But, Sir, in the fluoride toothpaste which is developed and marketed by Binaca, which have now changed their name to Cibaca, the fluoride content is anything between 800 to 1000 ppm. As my friend pointed out, many countries including African countries like Kenya have totally banned the use of fluoride toothpaste because particularly children, because of its sweetness, swallow he toothpaste instead of washing it. The luoride goes into the stomach and creates ll kinds of problems. So, I want to know rom the hon. Minister whether our Government will totally ban the use of fluoride toothpaste.

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO: I Cannot make any commitment in regard to totally banning it. I can certainly say, as I have already said, that the safe level of fluoride content can be gone into and investigated. That is one way of looking at it. The other thing is that if you want to ban fluoride, you will have to think of some other remedial measures in order to check caries. The only known method is fluoride. Therefore, there has to be a balance between the content of fluoride which is good and beyond which it is bad. And both are for the teeth, not for any other part of the body. Therefore, we have to strike a balance. We have to go into it. We have already requested the Drug Controller to look into it.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Would the hon. Minister clarify if there has been medical research in areas where there is fluorisis and where there is use of toothpaste with fluoride and what effect does it have on pregnant women and unborn children? Fluorisis leads to detrimental condition of the bones which makes the children and the adults concave legged which cannot be cured at all. Has the Medical Institute linked up with this exposure to fluoride in areas which are affected with fluorisis and the elements of fluoride which can be consumed internally while brushing your teeth? We are told that we have to do it two or three times. I want to know whether it can affect the unborn children.

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO: As I have already submitted, the incidence of fluorisis cannot be completely traced to fluoride toothpaste. We have hundreds of villages where nobody uses toothpaste, leave alone fluoride toothpaste. Still fluorosis is very, very prevalent. Essentially it is water-borne. It is because of the fluoride content of the water which they drink that there is fluorosis. We know people with stigg bones who just cannot move, cannot bend, cannot even recline. This is the kind of situation we find in the villages. We

have all seen such villages. We know such villages. Now it is a question whether in those areas where fluoride content is already high we could educate the people not to use fluoride toothpaste if they have been using it. As I said, it is very, very rarely that anybody would be using any toothpaste in those villages. But may be in some towns like Nalgonda and other district headquarters and taluk headquarters some people would be using it. To that extent I agree that there is need for educating the people not to use fluoride toothpaste because the fluoride which they are taking by way of water is already high. That can be done and that should be done.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 286. People have more interest in this than in fluoride.

AN HON. MEMBER: She is absent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What a pity.

*286. [*The Questioner (Shrimati Ratan Kumari) was absent. For answer is vide col. 32 in fra.*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 287.

Casual Workers in Railways

*287. SHRI KAILASH PATI MISHRA: SHRI LAL K. ADVANI:†

Will the Minister of TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of casual workers in each Zonal Railway as on 1st January, 1985 and 1st January, 1986 and the number of them who are being allowed to continue in service after giving breaks, to get over the rules for regular employment get over the rules for regular employment; and

(b) the number of them who continue to work after being given two or more breaks, Zone-wise?

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT (SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI): (a) and (b) A statment is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) (i). The number of casual labourers working as on 1.1.1985 and 1.1.1986 on various Zonal Railways and Production Units is as under:—

Railway/Production unit	As on 1-1-1985	As on 1-1-1986
Central	38,672	37,618
Eastern	18,856	21,561
Northern	47,842	47,554‡
North-Eastern	16,541	16,384
Northeast Frontier	10,317	9,403‡
Southern	26,945	25,118
South Central	20,746*	19,677‡
South Eastern	18,682	16,023
Western	25,377	21,750

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Lal K. Advani.

‡Figures are Provisional.